**Dana Molloy’s Assistive Technology Response!**

I think that for a long time and even today, many people are ignorant and naïve to the fact that just because someone has a physical disability doesn’t mean there is a disability within their minds. Until recently, there were not many ways to communicate with students who had disabilities that affected their speech and or writing. With the integration of technology there have been many different things produced that allows students with disabilities to communicate and participate in the general curriculum. We also seem to forget that technology isn’t always about making the average person’s life easier or more adaptable. The technologies used by those who have a disability can also be beneficial to the average student. I think the fact (as stated in the Edutopia video) that assistive technology is being introduced to students as early as possible is a great choice. Like they said in the video, the earlier students are exposed to it, the earlier they can master it that way they are able to focus more on content as they get older and not have to worry so much about how they’re going to get the work done. It’s the same case with someone who speaks a foreign language but is in an English speaking classroom. If they’re concerned about trying to translate words in a science classroom like velocity and momentum, they are at a certain disadvantage to native speakers. They have to learn the words as well as the content if they master English earlier, they will be more equipped to learn the material that is presented to them.

On the assistivetech.net website I saw a lot of reachers available for sale. I think these could be particularly useful in my future classroom for a student maybe confined to a wheelchair who is going to participate in a lab. The reachers will allow this student to work at a lab station even if they can’t reach the materials on their own. Assistive technology opens many doors for students with disabilities. Many students who went unheard or couldn’t participate in the general curriculum can now not only participate but also excel within the school system. Our ultimate goal is to have as many students, no matter what their ability, access the general curriculum at the highest level possible for them and to succeed whiles doing so. By incorporating assistive technology not only into the lives of these students but also in the classroom we are giving them the opportunity to do this successfully, which many haven’t always had in school. As technology progresses, we’re only giving them more and more of these opportunities to succeed.

I have had classes with students who use assistive technology like power chairs and laptops to help them complete their work and participate in class. I think as a future educator I will be very open to allowing many forms of assistive technology into my classroom. I am a firm believer that no matter what ability you have as a student, you can always benefit from using different technology as well as seeing topics presented in alternate manners rather than just pure lecture and chalk on a chalkboard. I have already found, through the work of this course as well as my own research, many valuable resources to use in my future classroom. Because of technology, I can now bring abstract ideas into the physics classroom and make them more “real” for all students. These new technologies will not only allow learners of all different learning styles to excel but will also help students with disabilities participate in my physics class.